

Be it known that I, Henry Orenstein, a citizen of the United States, residing at 136, Lakeside Ave. Verona, New Jersey 07044, have invented an improvement in

SKILL BASED POKER TOURNAMENT

Of which the following is a

SPECIFICATION

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] This invention relates to tournaments for poker which are based on a combination of skill and chance. The invention particularly relates to poker tournaments arranged for broadcasting or other exhibition to an audience.

[0002] My prior U.S. Patent 5,451,054 discloses a method and apparatus for exhibiting to an audience the play of a poker game, including hidden "down" cards of each player. The use of this method and broadcast of poker tournaments on television have recently gained popularity.

[0003] Poker tournaments usually follow the format of having a large number of players start play with a fixed stake. Players are eliminated from the tournament as they go bust by losing their entire stake. The winner of the tournament is the last surviving player, who has in effect won the chips of all other players. Such tournaments can also be arranged in rounds, with the winners of initial rounds playing in a final round. In such tournaments the element of chance plays a large role, since the most skilled player can lose a tournament because of chance, and a lucky player without skill can win the tournament.

[0004] Other games, such as bridge, are played in tournaments that include scoring of each hand of play, with the players being assigned points according to their playing results. Usually the element of chance is eliminated in bridge tournaments by using a "duplicate" playing arrangement, wherein a team of four players play in pairs, wherein each pair plays a different position with the same deal of cards. Accordingly the element of luck is eliminated from the tournament, and the tournament results are based primarily on skill. Such duplicate play is not available for a poker tournament.

[0005] It is an object of the present invention to provide an improved method of conducting a poker tournament which provides greater emphasis on the skill of the participants.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] In accordance with the invention there is provided a method for conducting a poker tournament for exhibition to an audience. The method includes selecting a first number of poker players and conducting a round of poker play. The round includes having the selected players play poker with a fixed stake until all but one of the players is eliminated, capturing for exhibition play of the round of poker, including determining and displaying to an audience the hidden cards of each player, and assigning points to at least some of the players according to the order in which the players are eliminated. The round of poker play is repeated for a selected number of rounds. A winner is selected according to the total number of points assigned to each player for the selected number of rounds.

[0007] In one arrangement the highest number of points is awarded to the one player who is not eliminated for each round, and the winner is selected as the player having the highest total number of points. The poker tournament may include prize money, and the prize money may be awarded to the selected players according to the total number of points assigned to each player. Alternately, the lowest number of points may be awarded to the player who is not eliminated for each round, and the winner is selected as the player having the lowest total number of points.

[0008] In accordance with a further aspect of the invention, a series of poker tournaments may be conducted wherein after each tournament at least one player is selected and eliminated according to the total number of points, and a different player is selected to replace the eliminated player.

[0009] In accordance with a further aspect of the invention there is provided a method for conducting a poker tournament. A first number of poker players are selected. A round of poker is conducted among the selected players. The round includes having the selected players play poker with a fixed stake until all but one of the players is eliminated, and assigning points to at least some of the players according to the order in which the players are eliminated. The round of poker is repeated a selected number of times. A winner is selected according to the total number of points assigned to each player for the selected number of rounds.

[0010] In one arrangement the highest number of points is awarded to the one player who is not eliminated for each round, wherein the winner is selected as the player having the highest total number of points. The poker tournament may include prize money, and the

prize money is awarded to the players according to the total number of points assigned to each player. Alternately, the lowest number of points may be awarded to the player who is not eliminated for each round, and wherein the winner is selected as the player having the lowest total number of points. In a preferred arrangement, after each tournament at least one player is selected and eliminated according to the total number of points and a different skilled player is selected to replace the eliminated player.

[0011] For a better understanding of the present invention, together with other and further objects, reference is made to the following description, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, and its scope will be pointed out in the appended claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0012] Figure 1 is a flow diagram illustrating an embodiment of the method of the present invention

[0013] Figure 2 is a diagram illustrating an example of scoring in connection with the present invention.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0014] The inventor has recognized that the audience appeal of a broadcast poker tournament can be enhanced if the results are based more on the skill of the players and less on the luck of the cards. Since the game itself is dependent to a large extent on the luck of the cards, conventional tournaments do not fully reflect the skill of the players involved. The inventor believes that participation limited to highly skilled players, with the results of a tournament based more on skill, can result in recognition of the best players, much as sports players achieve recognition in golf and tennis. Such players can be rated as players in sports tournaments, such as golf or tennis.

[0015] A broadcast tournament that better reflects player skill will enhance audience appeal, because the audience will be able to observe the strategy and play of the most skilled players, as they observe play of golf or tennis, and become fans of the various skilled players.

[0016] Typically poker tournaments rely on the process of elimination of players when they lose their allotted stake, for example, a fixed amount of chips or money. In a conventional tournament, even the most skilled player can be eliminated and less skilled players can be the winner, because of the chance factor that is inherent in the game.

[0017] According to the present invention, a first number of players are selected and invited to participate in the tournament. Selection can be initially performed by a committee of people knowledgeable in the qualities of poker players. Such players can be selected from those who have won more than a selected number of major tournaments

and/or won in excess of several million dollars in side games. An appropriate number of selected players is eight players, but the tournament can have more or less players.

[0018] The tournament of the invention is played in a series of "Rounds", for example six to ten rounds with the same players. The more rounds played, the more dependent the result is on skill, as compared to luck. Each round proceeds as a conventional poker tournament using one or more of the most popular poker games, such as No-Limit Texas Hold-em, Seven Card Stud, and Limit Texas Hold-em. In each round play proceeds and players are eliminated when they lose their allotted stake. In each round players are assigned points based on the order of elimination. For example, the highest number of points may be allotted to the player who eliminates all other players. A lower number of points can be allotted to the player who is last to be eliminated and so forth. The player who is eliminated first may be awarded the least number of points, or no points at all.

[0019] The points allotted to each player for all the rounds are added and the player having the largest number of points is declared the winner of the tournament. Figure 1 is a flow diagram illustrating the process of play for a typical embodiment of the invention. Figure 2 illustrates the scoring for a tournament of eight players having six rounds, wherein for each round the points are allocated as follows:

Round winner	10 points
Second place	7 points
Third place	6 points
Fourth place	5 points
Fifth place	4 points
Sixth place	3 points
Seventh place	2 points
Eighth place	1 point

[0020] It should be understood that the above allocation of points is exemplary only, and points may have different allocation. For example, Sixth, seventh and eighth places may be awarded no points. Alternately points may be inversely awarded with the first place winner being awarded the lowest number or no points, and the winner may be determined according to who has the least number of total points.

[0021] The point system can advantageously be used to award prize money in a tournament. In the example of figure 2, 38 points are awarded to the players for each round, for a total of 228 points. If the tournament features a one million dollar prize budget, each point awarded to a player would be worth \$4,386. The players are awarded prize money determined by their total points multiplied by the prize per point.

[0022] An optional feature of the method of the invention is conducting a further tournament with the same players except for elimination and replacement of one or two players who have scored lowest in the tournament. These would be replaced by other players, possibly selected from the winners of a second tiered tournament.

[0023] While there have been described what are believed to be the preferred embodiments of the present invention, those skilled in the art will recognize that other and further changes and modifications may be made thereto without departing from the spirit of the invention, and it is intended to claim all such changes and modifications as falls in the scope of the invention.